

I Received a Ticket, Now What?



The majority of cases heard in Municipal Court are traffic infractions. These citations can be handled in one of three ways: 1. By mail, following the instructions on the reverse side of the citation; 2. At the Municipal Court office in City Hall, where fines are assessed by the Court Clerk according to a schedule based on the type of offense and your driving record; or 3. By appearing in court at the time set for arraignment on the face of your citation.

Court Arraignments

The purpose of arraignment is to tell the judge how you wish to proceed with your case. Traffic arraignment times are on Thursday at 9:00am (last name beginning A-L) and 10:00am (last name beginning M-Z). For criminal and non-traffic arraignments, the Thursday time is 11:30am. Court Trials and Pre-Trial Conferences are handled on Thursday afternoons at 1:30pm. You should arrive before the scheduled time (which appears on your ticket) and check in at the court desk or with the bailiff before entering the courtroom.

There are two options at arraignment:

You can plead NOT GUILTY if you wish to contest the charge against you and go to trial. The trial ordinarily is scheduled within a three-month time period.

You can plead GUILTY or NO CONTEST. If you choose this option, you can offer an explanation of the circumstances. Your fine or other penalty, assessed by the Judge, would depend on your explanation, your driving record, and the seriousness of the offense.

A plea of NO CONTEST under Oregon Law results in a guilty finding by the court. The benefit to a no contest plea is that you do not have to admit guilt in open court.

If you do not follow any order of the court, including an order to pay a fine, your driver's license will be suspended and you may be subject to further legal action and costs. A plea of guilty or no contest will result in a conviction being entered on your driving record.

Trials

At trial, you and the police officer will appear in court to present evidence about your citation. Evidence can include the testimony of you and the officer, the testimony of any witnesses, and photographs or diagrams.

Non-attorney trials are informal and take 30 minutes or less. The judge will hear the evidence and normally make a decision at the end of the trial.

If you choose to hire an attorney, make sure that he or she notifies the court as soon as possible, no later than 5 days prior to the trial. A new trial date will be set.

If you fail to appear for trial, the court may enter a judgment against you which can include a fine. The conviction will be entered on your driving record.

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- [Municipal Court](#)

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